

# MARILYN

## AMONG FRIENDS



SAM SHAW AND NORMAN ROSTEN

M·A·R·I·L·Y·N  
*among friends*

SAM SHAW AND NORMAN ROSTEN

MAGNA BOOKS

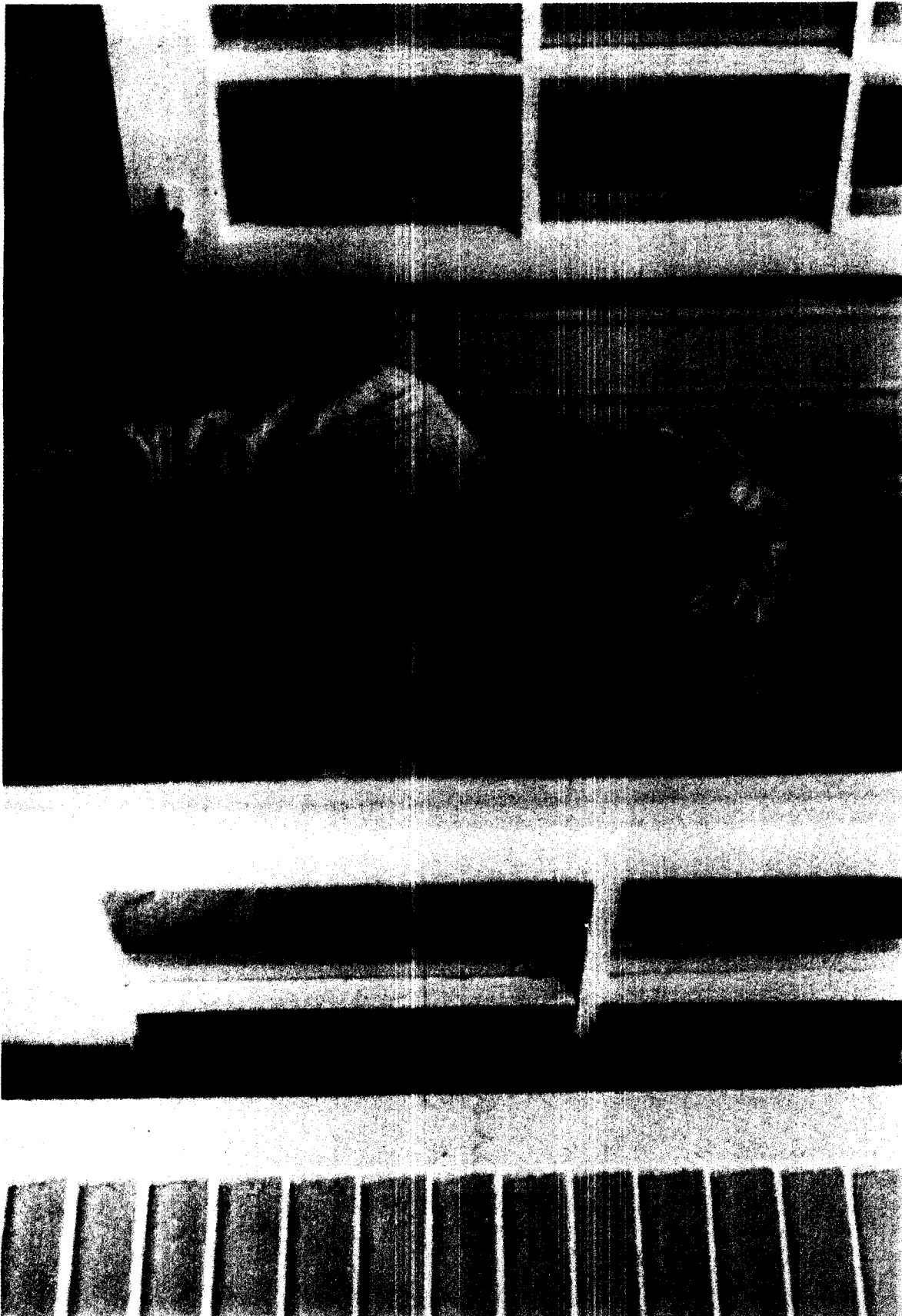
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the finishing touches to

She was the darling of columnists such as Walter Winchell and personal friend Earl Wilson, and others. She had the wit and camaraderie to spar with reporters and give them their daily bread: 'Nothing but the radio,' she replied when asked what she had on. She seemed to have the talent and humor to give on-the-spot answers to questions, making it all appear reasonable.

Q: 'What do you wear when you go to bed, Marilyn?'

A: 'Chanel Number Five. Now and then I switch to Arpège.'

Q: 'Do you have any love interest now?'

A: 'No, no serious interests. But I'm always interested.'

Her witticisms were often steeped in a technical knowledge of the business. During the shooting of a scene at a bar in *Bus Stop*, she asked director Josh Logan for a close-up of her. He agreed it was a good moment, but asked, 'How could I shoot a close-up in Cinemascope? [a new method in film photography] I would have to crop off the top of your head.' To which Marilyn replied, 'That's all right. In the previous set-up you established that I have a top to my head.' Even Logan had to join in the laughter.

*Set 'em up!*

*The press made her famous: cynical editors were charmed by this young woman in her late twenties who could hold her own with the pros in the number one drinking-hole in America, the 21 Club*



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*THE PRESS, OR WHY THEY LOVED HER* 27

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Johnny Graham (third from left), East Coast production manager who set up the logistics of the spectacular scene

and not to be forgotten, Marilyn came through as the flower of innocence, sex as good clean fun. America would love it, her, the scene, woman, symbol – the whole package. By next morning it was front page in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Tokyo, the whole world. But Joe was clearly unhappy. This was the entertainment capital of the world, fantasyville, peeping-tom land, Hollywood, and you learned to play the game.

Joe's game was baseball.

Marilyn, in her own way, respected his world, and its meaning for him. After their divorce, Joe and Marilyn (on a date) joined Sam and his wife Anne at Manny Wolf's restaurant in New York, on 49th and Third Avenue, a famed steakhouse for sports lovers, basically a man's hangout. On this particular evening, Joe was the special attraction; soon a number of men and their teenage sons stopped by their table, asking for Joe's autograph

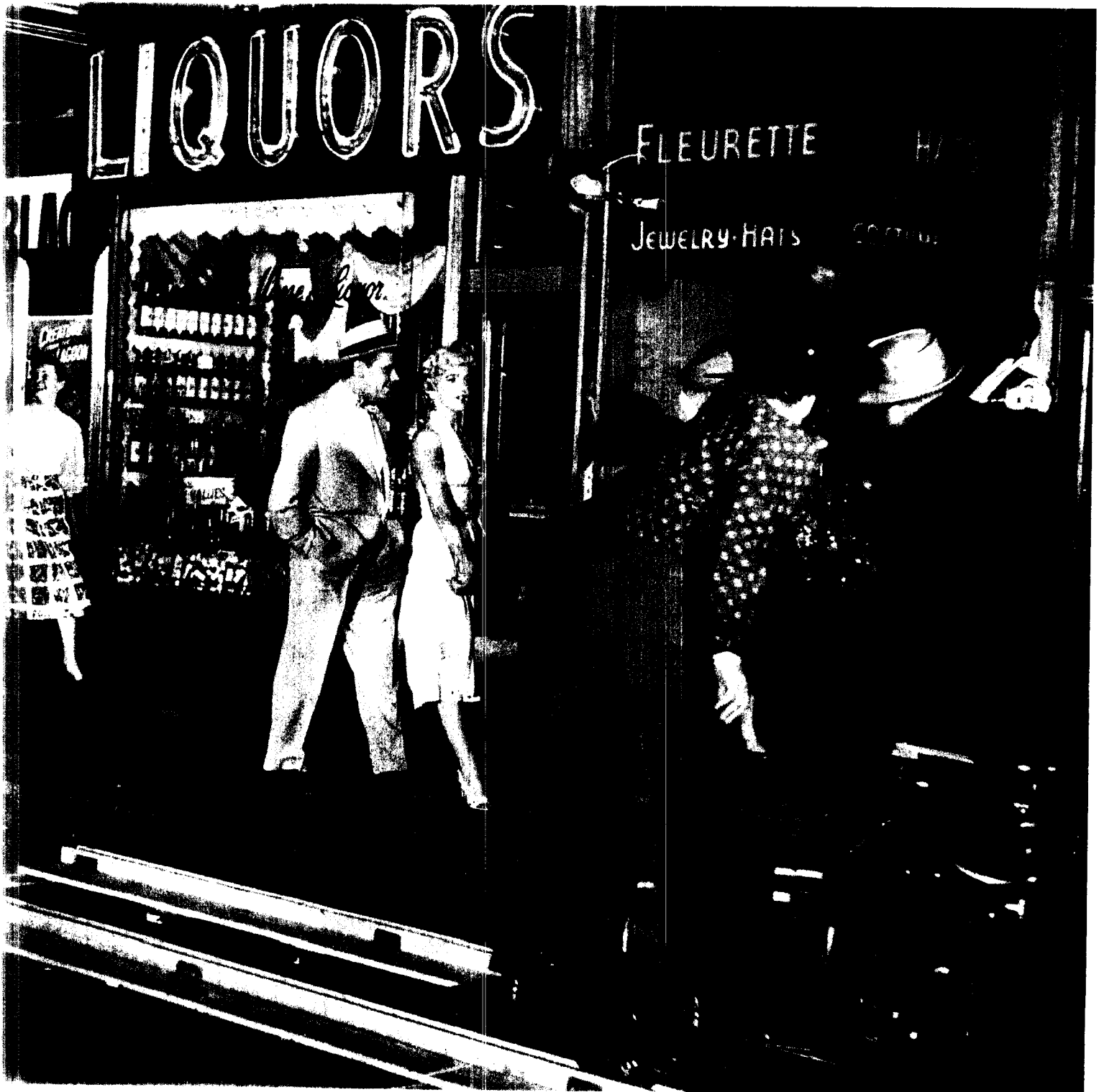
on slips of paper, or menu cards. He was the center of attention here. 'The interesting thing,' said Sam about that evening, 'Was Marilyn's attitude. She was proud of Joe, you could tell. She was beaming. She was not in the least bit hurt by watching Joe have his share of glory, you could see she had the highest respect for this man. She didn't know too much about baseball, but she knew he had millions of fans, even as she had. She knew what it must have meant to him, the pride of his art. She could understand that.'

And I could recall a scene in another famous restaurant, Chasen's in Beverly Hills, years after that separation, when my wife and I were joined by Marilyn and her escort William Inge. She had earlier starred in *Bus Stop*, based on Inge's hit play; my accidental meeting with Inge led to this impromptu dinner foursome. Bill Inge, solemn and friendly, was lamenting the decline of the authority of the

Rehearsing the shot



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screen writer. 'I must have labored on *Bus Stop* for over a year, only to watch it being changed from day to day during the shooting. Then I realized the script is merely a skeleton for the director.' With a courteous ironic smile toward Marilyn, he added, 'And maybe for the actress who loves to add a line or two in her speech.'

Marilyn laughed. 'You writers are always complaining. Why can't we help our character with our own insights, you know, to help what's on the page?'

'Because, dear lady,' Bill replied gently, 'Actors aren't writers, and get paid only to act.'

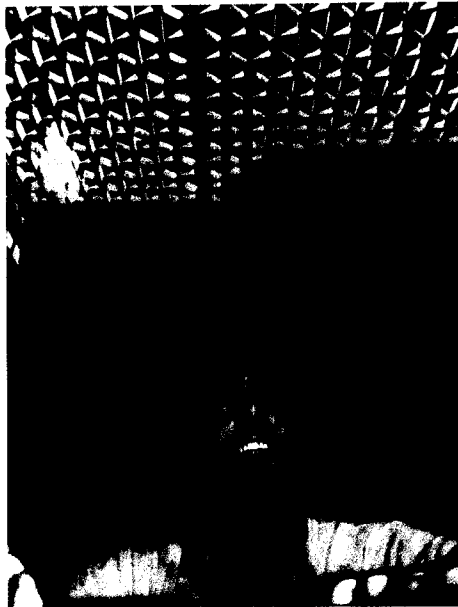
'I'm hungry, let's order,' said my wife, with her pragmatic wisdom.

'And I don't want to talk shop,' I said, 'Not on this lovely evening in Paradise.'

Marilyn waved to someone across the large room. To our surprise, a man quietly approached our table and greeted her with a slight bow. It was Joe DiMaggio, the second of her three ex-husbands. He gave Inge a curious but not unfriendly stare, putting him instantly at ease. Inge, unhappy at the possibility of being romantically linked with Marilyn, soon relaxed. Joe remained standing as he reached over for Marilyn's hand and pressed it, then turned and acknowledged her introductions. We were all delighted to meet him. One could sense a warm feeling between these two star-crossed lovers. It was a far cry from their dating years, sitting in the Beverly Hills Hotel with Joe's PR buddy, Bernie Kamber, with Joe watching baseball on TV for hours, fol-

*Hold the front page!*

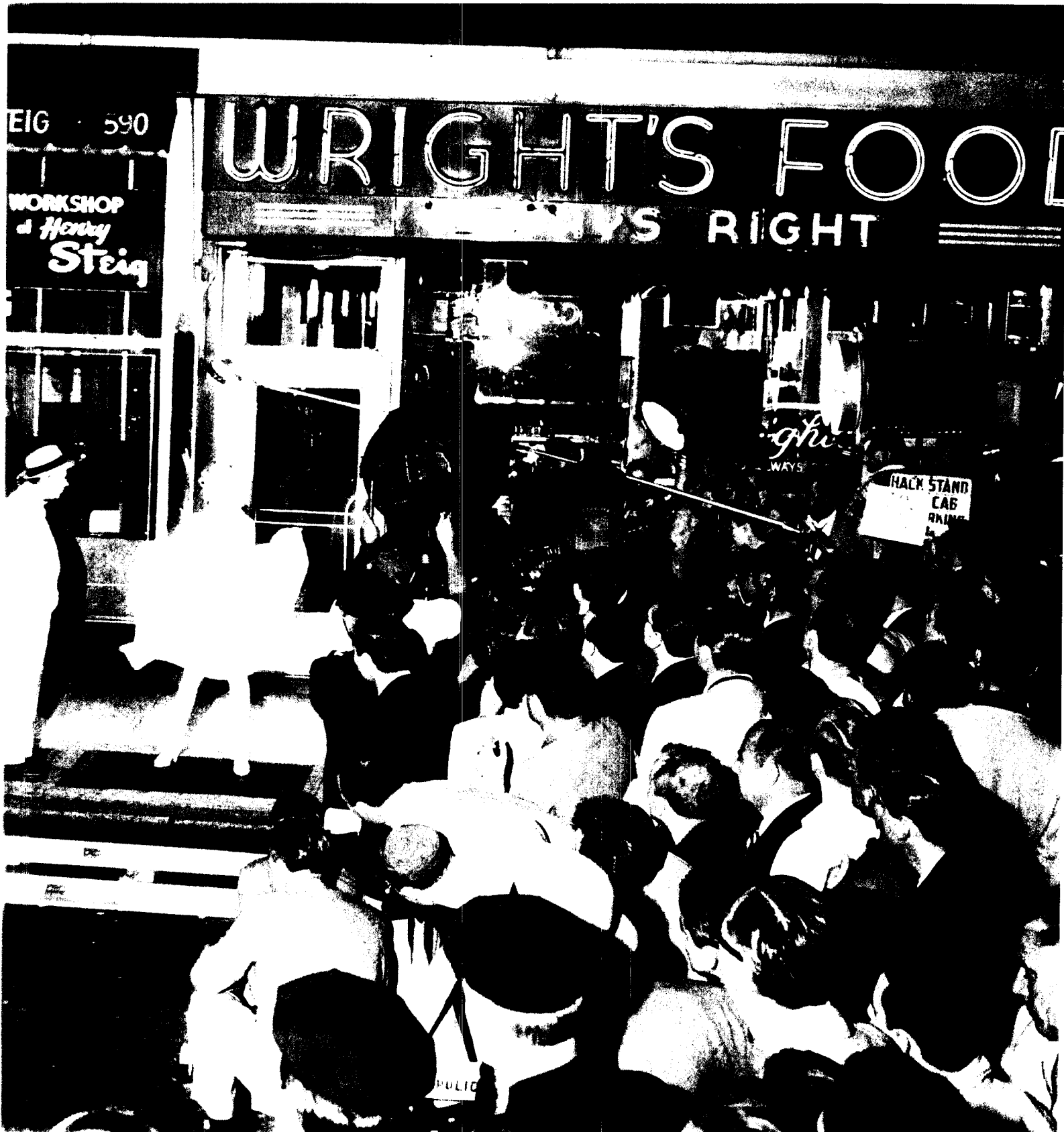
*51st Street, Lexington Avenue, Borough of Manhattan, USA, where the shot seen around the world was taken — front page from New York to California, including London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Tokyo . . .*



*The man who operated the wind-machine under the grating for the skirt-blowing shot*



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*PRIVATE STAR WARS 1952* 45

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lowed by a stretch of westerns. Marilyn sat next to him all the time, not understanding one play from another, yet desiring his company. It seemed to me, observing them now, that they should have been the happily-ever-after couple among her three marriages. She and Joe had a similar street-smart air, a tough instinct for survival, that might have served them well in the years to come. But a longing in her stirred to the music of a different drummer, a music that led her to a more ambitious and dangerous love. Miller, like DiMaggio, was a quiet man, with deep inner drives, centered less on others than on himself. And Marilyn, looking for a safe haven, turned toward him and the perilous adventures of art.

But at that moment, with Joe standing by, asking her about her new film in preparation, he appeared a steadfast friend. His fist playfully against her jaw, he said, 'Best of luck, kid. You have what it takes.' Yet he knew, this athlete who set a record of consecutive base hits in a glorious career, that every string must run out.

## 5

## 'ACTOR'S TRUTH'

On a film set, a 'nude' actor, say under a bedsheet, generally wore underwear. Such precautions were taken in case the covering should accidentally be whisked off by a prop person. Horrors! Nudity in a town where nudity is unknown!

Or, in a bathtub, the actress (men are rarely seen in baths, usually in macho showers) might be required suddenly to change position or rise abruptly. Horrors again in a town where a soap-covered female nude is a sacrilege! Thus, even in a bubble-bath shot, a few emergency clothing items were worn.

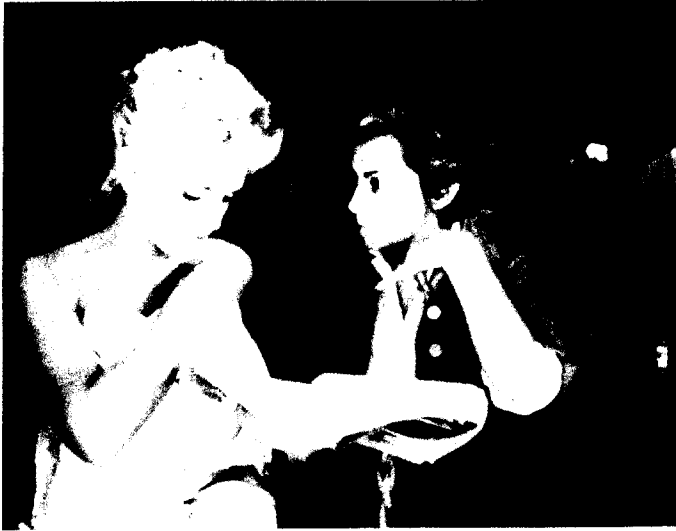
But Marilyn insisted on being nude under the coverings. She wanted 'to be true to the situation and character.' She called it 'actor's truth'. This attitude was instinctive and not as a result of the Method or her tuition from the master teachers Michael Chekhov and Lee Strasberg. She was great on instinct. She asked, 'Would *you* take a bath, bubble or not, wearing panties and a bra?'

Nude in real life, nude beneath the suds! While Victor Moore, who played a plumber in *The Seven Year Itch*, looked on and seemed to enjoy it.

*Don't peek!*

*Marilyn between takes (with cinematographer Milton Krasner in the background)*





*Acting coach Natasha Lytess takes Marilyn  
through her lines*

*That's not fair!*

*Billy Wilder sneaks a kiss from a captive Marilyn*





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*'ACTOR'S TRUTH'* 51



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## THE GIRL WITH NO NAME

Film writer George Axelrod said: 'I have seen at least twenty different actresses play the part of the Girl in my play *The Seven Year Itch*. I have seen the Girl as a blonde, a brunette, and a redhead. I've heard her say her lines with a British accent, in French, in Italian, in German. Many of the actresses have been wonderful in the part. A few have been a little less wonderful. But only one has ever come really close to playing the part exactly the way I imagined it when I first wrote it.

'Marilyn Monroe doesn't just play the Girl. She *is* the Girl. Marilyn once told me that playing the part had helped her to find out who she was. Which is a pretty nice thing for a writer to hear from an actress.

'I am revealing no breathtaking secret when I say that Marilyn has a reputation for

not being the easiest actress in the world to work with. Her eagerness and ambition make her tense up. She has difficulty remembering lines. She has been known to tell directors stark, raving mad. However, an interesting thing happened during the shooting of *Itch*. My favorite scene in the picture comes close to the end. It is a kind of sad and extremely difficult scene in which the Girl explains to the hero (who, to all outward appearances, is the least dashing, least glamorous, least romantic man alive) why she loves him exciting and attractive and why his jealousy has every reason to be jealous.

'Because of its difficulty and the fact that it ends with a long speech from the Girl, it was generally assumed that the scene would need several days to get on film. Billy V



